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ABSTRACT

This digest focuses on coaching certification, its importance, its current status, and types of certification programs currently in existence. The discussion also covers the status of women coaches and the issue of national certification requirements. The list of addresses of certification programs given includes commercial agencies state programs, and a recognized accreditation program for volleyball. (JD)

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CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHER EDUCATION

ERIC DIGEST EDO-SP 1-89

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Coaching Certification

This *ERIC Digest* will focus on coaching certification, its importance, its current status and types of certification programs currently in existence.

Any student-athlete who enters a sport program has the right to expect quality coaching and instruction. Most parents are very particular about the educator chosen to teach their children in a school classroom, yet are not similarly concerned about who coaches their youngsters in athletics. Professionals involved in athletics agree that the coach is the single most important factor affecting the athlete. Coaches have a significant impact on the lives of their young athletes and the student-athlete deserves a competent, well-trained leader. The coach is an important role model and influences values and attitudes. (Sabock, 1981)

History

Concern for the professional preparation of coaches at the high school level began as early as 1950 and in the late 1960s a coaching certification task force was formed by the Division of Men's Athletics (DMA), a substructure within the American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). The task force recommended the establishment of certification standards for teachers who wanted to coach by implementing coaching certification programs in conjunction with colleges to ensure a minimal degree of competency. (Sisley and Wiese, 1987)

In the 1970s the implementation of Title IX increased the number of girls' athletic teams which in turn resulted in a need for more qualified coaches. The demand for coaches nationwide dramatically exceeded the supply. (Acosta and Carpenter, 1985; Sabock, 1981)

As the need for qualified coaches increased, a declining enrollment and a depressed economy decreased the demand for classroom teachers. Concurrently, many of the teachers/coaches were retiring from coaching yet retaining their teaching positions. (Broderick, 1984)

Declining enrollment, maturing staffs, seniority systems, a declining economy, and the explosion of female participation in sports programs, all contributed to a demand for qualified coaches that exceeds the supply. Many states have had difficulty filling coaching positions, and were forced to change or make exceptions to their standards to meet coaching requirements.

Certification Standards

As a resolution to the supply/demand conflict, many states and schools changed their policies and hired non-educators to coach. Current research indicates the state coaching requirements range from requiring coaches to be certified teachers, to allowing individuals to coach who do not hold a teaching certificate. In some states there are different requirements for differing sports within a state. There is no national standardized certification program. Each state Department of Education or its State High School Athletic Association has determined its own standards for coaching certification. Regulations governing the hiring of interscholastic coaches are becoming less stringent.

Requirements

Recent statistics indicate that there are 350,000 high school coaches, one-third to one-half of whom have no sport-related education. Little agreement exists on the standards to certify coaches. At one time, only full-time certified teachers could be coaches. Today many states hire coaches who are not teachers and are not employees of the school system to fulfill vacant coaching positions. Many states have created coaching certification programs to ensure a minimum degree of competency, but, because the completion of such a program required time, money, and effort, it discouraged many potential coaches and resulted in states dropping the certification requirement. (Sisley and Wiese, 1987; Sabock and Chandler-Garvin, 1986)

But the need for qualified coaches continues, as Donna Lopiano (1986) points out:

> If we agree that the competent ethical and well-trained coach is the key to the elimination of undesirable behavior for which athletics is now being criticized, it seems obvious that the better organized we are in training this individual and the more selective we are in employing a coach, the better off our athletic program will be. (p. 34)

The increase in the need for coaches of women's and girls' teams has created an additional problem. Studies conducted by Acosta & Carpenter (1985) indicate that males, qualified and unqualified, dominate the coaching field. A national certification program will create better opportunities for women to gain entry-level positions and produce a better quality pool of applicants. Lopiano (1986) explains that "as long as there are no standards for access to entry-level positions in coaching, women will be denied access because they are not 'qualified' coaches. There is no standard for determining who is qualified." (p. 36) Once there is a standard, women will be able to gain certification and be qualified just as men are for entry-level positions.

Certification Programs

Many states and associations offer coaching certification programs but few agree on what the standards should be. Some resources are:

Commercial Agencies:

The National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA)
2611 Old Okeechobee Rd.
W. Palm Beach, FL 33409
(305) 684-1141

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION
One Dupont Circle • Suite 610 • Washington, DC 20036

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Provides a National Volunteer Coach Certification Program which trains and certifies volunteer coaches.

American Coaching Effectiveness Programs (ACEP)
P.O. Box 5076
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 351-5076
Focuses on the critical elements of the profession of coaching geared toward the high school coach.

Accreditation Programs:

United States Volleyball Association
1750 E. Boulder St.
Colorado Spring, CO 80909
(719) 632-3312
The USA Coaching Accreditation Program (CAP) is a four-level volleyball coaching education program. The program includes the American Coaching Education Program (ACEP).

State Programs:

ACEPT: American Coaching Effectiveness Training for Youth Sports
Leisure Press, Human Kinetics Press
P.O. Box 5076
Champaign, IL 61820

Sports Need You
c/o Dr. Susan Schaffer
201 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-6672

C.O.A.C.H. Project
c/o Bera Demchenko, Coordinator of Equity
School District of Philadelphia, Rm. 325
21st and The Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 299-8806

National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations
11724 Plaza Circle
P.O. Box 20626
Kansas City, MO 64195
(816) 464-5400
To contact an individual State Department of Education or the State Athletic Association.

Conclusion

The future of coaching certification is uncertain. Today's trends of hiring non-educators to coach and requiring limited professional preparation of coaches has raised concern over the educational value of interscholastic athletics as well as liability factors. These trends cause concern regarding the safety and welfare of the participant.

It is evident that the preparation and certification of athletic coaches will continue to receive attention. A national certification program will require the combined efforts of universities, state boards of education, the national governing bodies of sports, professional organizations, and the public. Certification of coaches is no guarantee that the problems will disappear or discontinue, but the problems can be reduced substantially if coaches can be certified in programs that approach those established for the education program.

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References

Many of the following references—those identified with an EJ number—have been abstracted and are in the ERIC database. The journal articles should be available at most research libraries. For a list of ERIC collections in your area or for information on submitting documents to ERIC, contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 293-2450.

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